Sonic Liturgy: Ritual and Music in Hindu Tradition

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Musical Examples from the accompanying CD

There are sixteen examples of chant and music on a CD that accompanies the book, *Sonic Liturgy: Ritual and Music in Hindu Tradition* (2012), by Guy L. Beck. Selections 1-8 are the courtesy of pre-recorded discs or audiotape, and songs 9-16 are from tapes recorded on site by the author. Unless specified, the translations are by Beck. The links to the MP3 recordings follow each selection.

1. Vedic Chant

The first selection is the Purusha-Sūkta, a famous hymn found in Rig Veda 10.90.1-5. The Sanskrit text and English translation are from Abinash Chandra Bose, *Hymns from the Vedas* (1966: 284-85). The recording is from the CD, *Vedic Chanting* (Courtesy of T-Series, 1995). Note the chanting comprises one-three notes.

Hari Oṁ

1) sahasra-sīrshāh purushah sahasrākshah sahasra-pāt
   sa bhūmiṁ viśvato vritvā atyatishtad daśāṅgulam
2) purusha evedaṁ sarvaṁ yad bhūtam yac ca bhavyam

utāmritatvasyeśāno yad annenātirohati

3) etāvān asya mahima ato jyāyāmś ca purushah
pādo'sya viśvā bhūtāni tripadasyāmritam divi

4) tripād ūrdhva udait purushah pādo'syehābhavat punah
tato viśvad vyakrāmat sāśanānaśane abhi

5) tasmād virāll ajāyata virājo adhi purushah
sa jāto atyaricyata paścād bhūmim atho purah

O Lord Hari (Vishnu). OM

1) Purusha is thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, thousand footed;
And, pervading the earth on all sides, he exists beyond the ten directions.

2) Purusha, indeed, is all this, what has been and what will be;
And the Lord of immortality transcending by mortal nurture.

3) Such is his magnificence, but Purusha is greater than this;
All beings are a fourth of him, three-fourths—his immortality—lie in heaven.

4) Three-fourths of Purusha ascended, the fourth part was here again and again,
And, diversified in form, it moved to the animate and the inanimate world.

5) From him was Virāj born, and from Virāj was born Purusha;
And, as soon as born, he spread over the earth from behind and in front.

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2. Sāma-Gāna

In this example of Sāma-Gāna, there is the addition of meaningless words called Stobhas, with extended syllables and added notes, differing from the three-note chant of the Rig Veda in the previous example. The translation also reveals a process where the priest (Hotar, from *hu*, “to call”) calls down the god to earth, in this case, in a descending scale, to the sacrifice.
The text is from Sāma Veda 1.1.1, with original Sanskrit found in Rig Veda 6.16.10, translated by Ralph T.H.Griffith, *The Sāma-Veda Samhitā*. (1991: 1-2).

OM agna ā yāhi vītaye griṇāno havya-dātaye, ni hotā satsi barhishi

“Come, Agni, praised with song, to feast and sacrificial offering: sit as Hotar [priest] on the sacrificial grass.”

The Sāman chant is chanted by Pt. Sahasrarama Aiyar, from an audiotape courtesy of G. H. Tarlekar, in *Saman Chants: In Theory and Present Practice* (1995: 72). Numbers in the text are an early form of notation.

OM og nā i // ā yā hī 13 vo i to yā 12 i /
To yā 12 i / gri ṇā no ha / vya dā to yā 12 i / to yā 12 i //
nā i ho tā sā 123 // tsā 12 i bā 1234 /
au ho vā // hī 1234 shī

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ARsSPwmTVgsajtuf_Ral9HtGzASJIjo2/view?usp=drive_link

3. Dhrupad

Dhrupad is the principal form of vocal classical music in northern India. The following is a Dhrupad composition in Cautal of twelve beats. The lyrics comprise names of Lord Śiva in the language of Braj Bhasha. Rāga Puriya, reserved for evening meditation and worship, is based on a scale using the notes C Db E F# A B C. After a short Alap that introduces the Rāga, the composition begins, set to a specific rhythmic accompaniment on the Pakhavaj (barrel-drum) without cymbals, as characteristic of classical Dhrupad. The first three lines serve as a refrain that begins on the seventh beat of the twelve-beat cycle. Sung in the lower register, each repetition of the refrain resolves upon the first beat that is coincident with the syllable “nā” of nātha. This selection, including text, is from the CD, *The Royal Collection of Mewar* (Courtesy of Virgin Records, 2002), performed by the Dagar Brothers of Udaipur: Late Ustad Nasir Moinuddin Dagar and Late Ustad Nasir Aminuddin Dagar,

Paravatī nātha Śiva
Śambhu mahābali
mahārūpa mahādeva jāge

Translation:

Oh Lord of Parvatī, Śiva, Śambhu, you have great strength and form. Oh Mahādeva. Please rise!

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4. Dhamar

In the Dhrupad genre, Dhamar is a composition in the rhythm of fourteen beats. The lyrics in this case are in Braj Bhasha and depict the pastimes of Krishna, known as Gopāla, the son of Nanda. Rāga Lalit, reserved for early morning worship, is based on a scale using the notes C Db E F F# Ab B C. After a brief introduction of the Rāga, the composition begins, accompanied on the Pakhavaj (barrel-drum). The first two lines serve as a refrain that begins on the eleventh beat of the fourteen-beat cycle. Sung in the lower register, each repetition of the refrain resolves upon the first beat that is coincident with the syllable "pā" of Gopāla. The latter two lines serve as a verse and are sung in the upper register. A unique feature of Dhrupad and Dhamar is the lively repetition and permutation of fragments of the lyric. This selection, including text, is from the CD, *Dhrupad of Darbanga*, by the Mallik family and Pandit Bidur Mallik (Courtesy of VDE-Gallo, 2000).

Śrī Gopāla Nanda Lāla
Ho tuma darasa ko behāla
Naina tarasa rahata

Tumāre darasa ko Braja ke bāla

Translation:

Gopāla, darling of Nanda,
you are making me unrestful to see you
The eyes remain restless to see you, children of Braj

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PZAoQjBqWFARU4fPQA85H1VoBD2uIsy0/view?usp=drive_link

5. Haveli Sangit: Vallabha Sampradāya

Haveli Sangit is related in structure and form to classical Dhrupad. This selection is a composition in Cautal of twelve beats, composed by the Pushti Marg poet Chaturbhuj Dās. The lyrics describe a worship situation in adoration of Lord Krishna in the language of Braj Bhasha. Rāga Bhairava, reserved for early morning meditation and worship, is based on a scale using the notes C Db E F G Ab B c. The composition is set to a specific rhythmic accompaniment on the Pakhavaj (barrel-drum) with cymbals, as characteristic of Haveli Sangit. Haveli Sangit compositions are lengthier than normal classical Dhrupad and contain many verses. The first two lines serve as a refrain that begins on the first beat of the twelve-beat cycle. The first beat falls on the syllable “ra” of ratana. This selection is sung by Pt. Askaran Sharma, from the audiotape, *Krishna Leela Keertan* (Courtesy of HMV, 1993). The text is from *Nitya Kīrtan: Rasa Ratnākara* (42, #146).

ratana jaḍita kanaka thāla, madhya sohe dīpamāla
agara ādi candana soṅ ati sugandha soṅ milāi māi
ghanana ghana ghaṇṭā ghora, jhanana jhanana jhālara jhakora
tata thei - tata thei braja kī nāri suhāi māi
tanana – tanana tana-māna, rāga ranga rasa bandhāna
gopī saba gāvata hai mangala badhāi māi
Chaturbhuja Prabhu giridharana lāla, āratī banī rasāla
jana – mana – dhana vārati hai yaśomati nandarāi māi

Translation: H. S. Mathur

The golden plate is studded with gems, and the middle of it are the earthen lamps.
And there is the extremely pleasant aroma of sandalwood and incense all over.
The bells are sounding, the cymbals are crashing, and the lovely women of Braj are reciting the sounds of rhythm.
All the Gopīs sing auspicious greetings in colorful musical tunes and embellishments, bound up in different ragas.
Chaturbhuj says that the worship of Śrī Giridharilāl (Krishna) is very enchanting. Mother Yaśodā is offering herself, heart, and wealth.

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6. Haveli Sangit: Vallabha Sampradāya

This selection of Haveli Sangit is also in Cautal of twelve beats. Composed by the Pushti Marg poet Chitswami, the lyrics describe a scene in which cows are coming home after grazing the whole day. Rāga Purvi, reserved for late afternoon meditation and worship, is based on a scale using the notes C Db E F F# G Ab B c. Accompanied by Pakhavaj (barrel-drum) and cymbals, the first beat falls on the first syllable “ā” of āge. This selection is sung by Pt. Askaran Sharma, from the audiotape, *Krishna Leela Keertan* (Courtesy of HMV, 1993). Text from *Nitya Kīrtan: Rasa Ratnākara* (316, #1094).

āge gāya pāche gāya ita gāya uta gāya
govinda ko gāyana meṅ basa boī bhāve
gāyana ko sanga dhāve gāyana meṅ sacu pāve
gāyana kī khura reṇu, anga lapaṭāve
gāyana soṅ braja chayo baikuṇṭha bisarāyo
gāyana ke heta kara giri le uṭhāve
Chītaswami giridhāri viṭhṭhaleśa bapudhāri
svarupa ko bhekha dhareṅ gāyana meṅ āve

Translation: H. S. Mathur

There are cows in the front, in the back, and all around. Govinda likes to remain among the cows.
He runs along with the cows and gets happiness, and the dust raised by the cows’ hooves he smears on his body.

The land of Braj is full of cows and Krishna has forgotten Vaikuntha in the love of cows, and for the benefit of the cows, he lifted up Govardhan Hill.
Chitswami says that Giridhari Viṭhṭhaleśa (Krishna) has assumed the form of cowherd and he has come in the company of cows.

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7. Haveli Sangit: Vallabha Sampradāya

This selection is a composition in Tintal of sixteen beats. Composed by the Pushti Marg poet Chaturbhuj Dās, the lyrics describe Rādhā and her friends awaiting the return of Krishna. Rāga Gauri, reserved for late morning meditation and worship, is based on a scale using the notes C Db E F F# G Ab B c. The first line serves as a refrain that begins on the thirteenth beat of the sixteen-beat cycle. The first beat falls on the syllable “ca” of calata. This selection is sung by Pt. Askaran Sharma, from the audiotape, *Krishna Leela Keertan* (Courtesy of HMV, 1993). The text is from *Nitya Kīrtan: Rasa Ratnākara* (322, #1115).

laṭakata calata yuvatī sukhadānī
sandhyā sameṅ sakhā-maṇḍala meṅ sobhita tana gauraja lapaṭānī
mora mukuṭa guñjā pīropaṭa mukha muralī guñjata mridubānī
Chaturbhuja Prabhu giridhārī āye banateṅ le āratī bārati nandarānī

Translation: H. S. Mathur

The pleasing young woman, Rādhā, is swaying back and forth as she walks.
In the evening, she is looking radiant among her circle of friends, her body besmeared with dust from the cows.
She adorns her head with peacock feathers, pearls, and wears a yellow scarf. On her lips the flute produces a sweet tone.
Chaturbhuj Prabhu says that Lord Krishna has returned from the forest, so Yaśodā is performing Āratī, dedicating herself to him.

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8. Haveli Sangit: Vallabha Sampradāya

Govind Swami was one of the eight Ashtachap poets of the Vallabha Sampradāya and composed Dhrupads for the worship of Śrī Nāthjī at Govardhan Hill in Braj.
This composition is set to Rāga Chayanat in Rupak Tāla of seven beats. The notes are of the major scale with the addition of Bb. The influence of Khayal style can be discovered in the singer's use of ākara passages (singing "a" in short tāna patterns). This selection is sung by Pt. Askaran Sharma, from the audiotape, *Krishna Leela Keertan* (Courtesy of HMV, 1993). The text is from *Nitya Kīrtan: Rasa Ratnākara* (298, #1025).

prītama prītahī teṅ paiye

yadyapi rūpa guna sīla sugharatā ina bātana na rijhaiye
satkula janma karma subha lakshana veda – purāṇa padhaiye
Govinda Prabhu binā sneha suālī rasanā kahā nacaiye

Translation: H.S. Mathur

One can obtain the beloved Lord only through love.
Although one may have beauty, qualification, virtue, elegance -- these things do not please the Lord!
Birth in a good family, good deeds, and good qualities, and the study of Veda and Purāṇa;
Govind Swami says that without love for God, these are meaningless, just like rolling of the tongue (wasting your breath)

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9. Samāj Gāyan: Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya

This recording was in 1976 at the main Radhavallabha Temple in Vrindaban. The composition is by the poet Acala Das of the tradition and displays many unique features. Utilizing the major scale with addition of Bb, the melody reveals a mixture of Rāga Desh and Rāga Vilaval. The rhythm is a slow Dhamar with alternate fast repeats in Dip Chandi and Keherva at the end. While only the first two lines are included here, the entire composition of thirty-two lines extends to forty

minutes in performance. The transliterated text (RV 1.117-118) is from Beck (2011: 90-92).

aho ranga ho-ho-ho-horī khelaiṅ sakala kuṁvari barasāne kī /
tinameṅ rasika siromani syāmā ekahi vaisa samāne kī //

Translation: H. S. Mathur

Behold! The maidens of Barsana are playing colorful Holi. Amidst them is the Crown
Jewel of the Rasikas, Syāmā (Rādhā) of the same age.

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10. Samāj Gāyan: Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya

This composition of Sri Hita Harivamsa is a beautiful Dhrupad in the Radhavallabha tradition. The Rāga is a variant of Gaur Malhar, the notes of the major scale with the addition of Bb, and the rhythm is a clearly defined Cautal (12 beats). The first beat of the refrain begins with the word “nayau,” and the verse begins with “nava pitambara.” These are rendered in fast repeats until the end. This recording was in July 1988, led by Sri Rajendra Prasad Sharma in Vrindaban. The transliterated text (RV 2.78, CP 54) is from Beck (2011: 146-147)

nayau neha nava ranga nayau rasa

navala syāma vrishabhānu kisorī /
nava pītāmbara, navala cūnarī
naī - naī būndana, bhījata gorī //

Translation: Rupert Snell (1991: 231-232).

New is the love, novel the merriment and new the delight
of young Shyama and Vrishabhanu's daughter;
new is his yellow garment and new her many-coloured sari,
and with ever new raindrops is the fair one drenched.

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11. Samāj Gāyan: Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya

This poem is by Hita Harivamsa from his work *Sphut-Vani* (SV). Celebrating the birthday of Krishna, the setting of this poem involves a unique melody in Kalyan scale, a major scale with F# instead of F, and the free-style rhythm of Keherva. Yet there is a specific pattern of the hand cymbals in eight beats: X xx X xx xx X X xx. The X signifies one strike per beat, and xx signifies two strikes per beat. This is quite a sophisticated pattern, especially in combination with the drum improvisations. There is a beautiful bond between the melody, the rhythm, and the lyric that almost seems as if the poem was written with this tune in mind. This recording was in August 1992, led by Rajendra

Prasad Sharma in Vrindaban. The transliterated text (RV 2.254, SV 11) is from Beck (2011: 154-155).

ānanda āju nanda ke dvāra /
dāsa ananya bhajana rasa kārana pragaṭe lāla manohara gvāra //
candana sakala dhenu tana maṇḍita kusuma dāma rañjita āgāra /
pūrana kuṁbha bane torana para bīca rucira pīpara kī ḍāra //
juvati jūtha mili gopa virājata bājata paṇava mridanga su tāra /
jaya Śrī Harivaṁśa ajira vara vīthina dadhi madhi dūdha harada ke khāra //

Translation: Charles S. J. White (1996: 94-95).

There is joy today at Nanda's door:
Darling Krishna born a cowherd from the Bhajan Rasa of the Bhaktas' songs.
Sandal paste adorns the bodies of the cows:
The houses elegant with flower garlands, arches beauteous there are,
full of Pipal branches in the midst of jars.
How handsome are the maidens, met with cowherds,
Keeping time upon the drums, both long and small.
Sri Hit Harivams says, in the courtyards and the lanes is the best of saffron-colored honey, milk, and curd!

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12. Samāj Gāyan: Rādhāvallabha Sampradāya

This poem of Hita Harivamsa suggests the relaxed mood of the deities preparing for their eternal rest in the kunja. The melody is in Raga Desh, comprised of the major scale with the addition of Bb, but in this case with upper flatted E, and the Tala of Dadra (6 beats). In Western terms, it is like a fast waltz or 6/8. The melody is complete in two lines, with the two-line verses complementing the refrain. This recording was made in October 1992, led by Sri Rajendra Prasad Sharma in Vrindaban. The transliterated text (RV 3.221) is from Beck (2011: 239-240).

nāgarī nikuñja aina kiśalaya dala racita saina,
koka kalā kuśala kuṁvari ati udāra rī /
surata ranga anga-anga hāva-bhāva bhrikuṭi bhanga,
mādhurī taranga mathata koṭi māra rī //
mukhara nūpurana subhāva kiṅkiṇī bicitra rāva,
birama-birama nātha vadata bara vihāra rī /
lāḍilī kiśora rāja haṁsa-haṁsinī samāja,
sīṅcata Harivaṁśa naina surasa sāra rī //

Translation: H.S. Mathur

The pleasure bed for amorous love between Radha and Krishna has been plentifully decorated with lotus flowers by an expert Sakhi in the bower. In the course of their love-making they exhibit motion in all their bodily limbs. The movements of their eyebrows and the constant flow of

love have overcome even Kāmadeva. The tinkling sound of their waist belts and anklets is extremely beautiful as they are enjoying their amorous play. Krishna and Radha are looking like he and she swans, and the poet Hita Harivamsa is viewing this love-game irrigated by the water of love.

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13. Samāj Gāyan: Nimbārka Sampradāya

This selection presents one of the standard hymns of praise that commence a morning sitting of Samāj Gāyan in the Nimbārka Sampradāya. Drawn from the earliest anthology of Braj Bhasha verses in this tradition, the *Yugala-Śaṭaka* by Śrī Bhaṭṭa, it is set in a slow Keherva of eight beats in Rāga Bhairavi (comprised of the notes C Db Eb F G Ab Bb C, with an accidental on D). This recording was in March 1976 in Vrindaban, led by Sri Rupkishor Maharaj of the Nimbārka Sampradaya. The text is from *Yugala-Śaṭaka* Atirikta Pada 2 (1992: 51).

mangala mūrati niyamānanda
mangala jugala kisora haṁsa vapu, śri sanakādika ānanda kanda
mangala śrī nārada muni munivara, mangala nimba divāakara canda
mangala śrī lalitādi sakhīgana, haṁsa baṁsa santana ke vrinda
mangala śrī vrindāvana jamunā, tata vamsīvaṭa nikaṭa ananda
mangala nāma japata jai Śrī Bhaṭṭa, kaṭata aneka janama ke phanda

Translation:

Praise to the image of Śrī Nimbārka
Who is a storehouse of bliss for the four Kumaras, and the pond that supports the swan below Rādhā-Krishna.
Praise to Nārada Muni, the best of the sages, Praise to the Neem tree, the sun, and the moon.
Praise to Lalitā and the Sakhīs, like young swans in the swan family.
Praise to Vrindaban and the Yamunā River, and the bliss surrounding the tree of Vamśivata.
Praise to the name of Śrī Bhaṭṭa, chanting of which is the secret of many births.

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14. Samāj Gāyan: Nimbārka Sampradāya

This composition by Harivyāsadevāchārya is a Dhamar of fourteen beats in Raga Kafi, comprised of the notes C D Eb F G A Bb C, with accidentals on E and F#. There are many Dhamar compositions in Raga Kafi associated with the Holi season in Vrindaban. This recording was in Vrindaban in March 1976, when Rupkishor Maharaj led members of the Nimbārka Sampradāya in singing a Holi Dhamar composition at a special session during the Holi season. The tempo alternates between slow and fast, with rapid playing of the Pakhavaj and cymbals. The text is from *Śrī Mahāvāṇi* Utsāha Sukha (1975: 69).

rasa horī khilāvana āi rangīlī ranga-bharī
liyen kala-kanthyādi suhāi rangīlī ranga-bharī
rasa horī khilāvana āi sudevī ranga-bharī
liyen kabarā ādi suhāi rangīlī ranga-bharī
rasa horī khilāvana āi lalitā ranga-bharī

Translation:

All the Sakhīs and Sahelīs have gathered to play Holi with wonderful colors
They are coming and playing Holi together full of colors
Taking many by the neck and enjoying the playing of Holi with colors
Sudevi has come to play Holi with colors
Everyone takes many colors and enjoys the Holi sport
Lalitā has come to enter the playing of Holi with colors

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15. Samāj Gāyan: Haridāsî Sampradāya

This selection of poet Pitambaradev contains prayers in praise of the Gurus that is sung before a session of Samāj Gāyan. Rendered in Rāga Shyam Kalyan, it utilizes the major scale with an accidental on F# and a rhythm of eight beats called Keherva. The recording was made in April 1993, in Haridas Nagar, a residence in Vrindaban for monks of the

Haridāsî Sampradāya. At this time, sessions were held every evening led by Chabilisaran Maharaj. The text is from their hymnal known as *Samāj-Śriṇkhalā* (1988: 4).

Choṭta Guru Mangala Prayers (short prayers in praise of the Gurus)

Śrī Guru Mangala gāya manā
Śrī Haridāsa carana bandana kari, vipula vinoda baḍhāya ghanā
Śrī Bihārī Bihārini dāsi parama ruci sarasa manoratha pāya dhanā
Śrī Narahari rasika siromani murati pītāmbara bali jāya janā

Translation:

I sing praise to the Gurus.
I bow down to the feet of Swami Haridas, to the greatness of Vipulvinod,
To the supreme ocean of bliss of the mind, Biharini Das, to the image of Narahari, the crown of the Rasikas. Pitambaradev says, 'All Glory to the Gurus.'

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16. Samāj Gāyan: Haridāsî Sampradāya

The last composition is by Swami Haridas, the founder of the sect. The rhythm of the refrain is a slow Dhamar that picks up to a medium

Rupak (seven beats) as the second line progresses. The third line again reverts to the slow Dhamar. The melody defies Rāga classification yet contains elements of the Kalyan scale, such as the sharpened fourth. The recording was made in April 1993, in Haridās Nagar, a residence in Vrindaban for monks of the Haridāsî Sampradāya, led by Chabilisaran Maharaj. The text is from *Samāj-Śriṇkhalā* (1988: 7).

nācata morana sanga syāma mudita syāmāhi rijhāvata /
taisīye kokilā alāpata papīhā deta sura taisoī megha garaja mridanga-bajāvata //
taisīye syāma ghaṭā nisi-sī kārī taisīye dāmini kaundhi dīpa dikhāvata /
Śrī Haridāsa ke svāmī syāmā kunja bihārī rījhi rādhe hamsi kaṇṭha lagāvata //

Translation: H.S. Mathur

Śyām (Krishna) is happily dancing with the peacocks and enticing Śyāmā (Rādhā). The Kokila birds (cuckoos) are singing and the Papiha birds are responding. The thunder in the sky sounds like the playing of drums. The dark clouds are like the blackness of night, and the flashes of lightning appear like an Arati lamp. The poet Swami Haridas says that Kunja Bihari (Krishna) is enamored of Radha, smiling and embracing her.

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